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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000559

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREF](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA: KURDS' HEADLONG RUSH TOWARDS KRG
EXPANSION

REF: A. (A) 06 BAGHDAD 02048 (B) 06 BAGHDAD 04364
[1](#)B. (C) 06 BAGHDAD 04584 (D) BAGHDAD 00455

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Team Leader James Knight:
1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Kurds in Ninewa continue to press forward to incorporate significant areas of Ninewa Province into the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) through the 'disputed territories' process foreseen by Article 140 of the current Iraqi Constitution. In this headlong effort, Ninewa's Kurdish Alliance leadership appears to be reaching far beyond law or regulation so far promulgated for the Article 140 process. Kurd efforts are being pursued with single-minded imperiousness which is uniting Ninewa's Sunni majority and most minorities against the KRG expansion agenda -- most anti-KRG voices point out that violent opposition to the process is inevitable if it continues to move forward in this way. END SUMMARY.

THE VIEW FROM MOSUL . . .

[1](#)2. (C) Ninewa's Deputy Governor Khasro Goran is the Kurdistan Democratic Party Chair for the province and head of the Kurdish Alliance, whose list won 30 of the 41 seats on Ninewa's Provincial Council in the 2005 provincial elections. Khasro is the leading proponent of KRG expansion in Ninewa; Ninewa PRT IPAO Holtsnider met Khasro 31 January to clarify incidental discussion of Khasro's disturbing current views on the Article 140 process with Team Leader Knight at an earlier unrelated meeting.

[1](#)3. (C) Khasro's current effort pivots on the 'normalization, census, referendum' process outlined by Article 140, but adds a disconcerting element of directed rather than electoral resolution. Khasro currently believes that 'normalization' will include land grants and compensation to Arabization settler families that return to their pre-1968 place of residence. In Ninewa, such returning families will receive ID 5 mn (about USD 3,900). Returnee households must register with the local authorities and provide proof of pre-1968 residency. Land disputes arising from such resettlement will be resolved by the Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC). Goran is optimistic that renormalization will be well underway in March 2007 for the

districts of Sinjar, Tal'Afar, Tal Kaif, Shikhan, Hamdaniya, Makhmur, and portions of Mosul district.

¶4. (C) In Khasro's view, Districts and Sub-Districts will be returned to their pre-1968 provincial assignments as part of the 'normalization' process. These realignments will be formalized by letters originating from the President of Iraq. Per Khasro, if the GOI acts at the national level, assignment of a district to a province in the KRG will obviate the need for a referendum there since such territories will longer be disputed. Only in cases where the GOI cannot come to consensus at the national level will referenda proceed.

¶5. (C) Khasro expects that the census required by the Article 140 process will be satisfied by the Iraqi national census anticipated summer 2007. After the census is completed, referenda will ascertain whether voters in each 'territory' -- i.e., those remaining in dispute after GOI reassignments to former provinces -- wish to join the KRG.

¶6. (C) Khasro stated that he believes the Article 140 process overrides provincial elections -- which in any case should be scheduled after disputed territories are resolved. Accordingly, he believes provincial elections are unlikely to occur in 2007.

. . . FROM UPCOUNTRY NINEWA . . .

BAGHDAD 00000559 002 OF 003

¶7. (C) After this discussion with Khasro, Ninewa IPAO Holtsnider followed up with meetings 6-7 February with Mayor of Sinjar District Dakhel Qasim Hassoun, Ba?aj District Mayor Abdulrahim Qasim Muhammad, and Zumar District Mayor Mizahim Sulaiman al-Sa?doon. All three indicated that the range of 'disputed territories' continues to widen. The Mayor of Ba?aj -- whose Sub-District of al-Adnaniya is a salient target for KRG expansion -- predicted that precipitous attempts to incorporate al-Adnaniya into the KRG will cause fighting quote that will last until the last man is killed unquote.

¶8. (C) The Sinjar District Mayor -- a KRG appointee -- was predictably more insouciant about the Article 140 process. He currently expects Sinjar to be assigned to the KRG at the national level without a referendum, in accordance with Khasro's program.

. . . AND AT THE SINJAR ARTICLE 140 OFFICE

¶9. (C) Also on 7 February, IPAO Holtsnider met with the Director and staff of the Article 140 office recently established in Sinjar. Office Director Saeed Jaradu Matto -- a KRG appointee -- leads a staff of seven currently compiling registers of Kurd families wishing to return to Sinjar and Arabization program settlers who might be induced to depart.

¶10. (C) Matto, unlike Khasro and the Mayor of Sinjar, continues to believe that Article 140 referenda will be held in every disputed territory of Ninewa. However, he also confirmed that the Article 140 process will encompass previously undisputed areas in Ninewa, including Tal Kaif District. In Matto's understanding, 'normalization' will be completed by the end of March 2007; the

necessary census will be undertaken in July 2007;
and referenda will be scheduled in November 2007.
Matto further noted that he hopes for U.S.
facilitation of international donor support for
Article 140 relocation compensation funds.

MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE

¶11. (C) Ninewa's minorities include several kinds
of Christians, Shi'a and Sunni Turcomans, Yezidis,
and Shabaks. All are riven by factions, including
divisions along the pro-/anti-KRG axis, but most of
our interlocutors suggest that anti-KRG sentiment
predominates. While the USG and the KRG follow
Christians and Turkey monitors Turcomans, Yezidis
and Shabak have no strong external support.

¶12. (C) Yezidis are generally ignored in the
Article 140 debate, but Kurds are often insistent
that Shabak are in fact a Kurdish group. Khasro in
particular is insistent that the Shabak are in fact
Kurds, and dismisses claims to the contrary.
However, Ninewa's minorities as a whole are likely
to join the province's Sunnis to resist KRG
expansionism to the extent they believe it is safe
to do so.

¶13. (C) The most significant minority group
favoring the KRG are some Assyrian and other
Christians currently benefiting from patronage
channeled through KRG Minister of Finance Sarkesi.
Sarkesi in particular favors establishment of a
Christian area on the Ninewa Plain (basically
between Mosul city and the KRG's current boundaries)
which would be a de facto protectorate of the KRG --
again, this 'minority' agenda is generally believed
to be another face of KRG expansionism.

COMMENT

¶14. (C) Some areas of Ninewa adjacent to the
current KRG may be incorporated through the Article
140 process without great anguish elsewhere in
Ninewa -- particularly Makhmur and Shikhan Districts
and the Sub-District of Zumar, as noted reftels.
However, Kurdish expansionism elsewhere will meet

BAGHDAD 00000559 003 OF 003

resistance that will almost certainly be disruptive
and may turn violent. One recent example of fallout
from preemptory Kurd efforts in favor of KRG
expansion was the revolt of Sunni and minority
Provincial Council members on 8 February (reftel D);
more such instances are sure to follow.

¶15. COMMENT CONTINUED. Ironically, the current
guarantor of relative peace in Ninewa in this
critical year is fear of the KRG's Peshmerga militia
-- already widely deployed in Ninewa -- and the
perceived likelihood that Peshmerga will forcibly
intervene to protect KRG interests if resistance to
those interests becomes violent. END COMMENT.
KHALILZAD